

PROGRESS OF THE FLORA OF WEST TROPICAL AFRICA

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Since the last AETFAT Conference in 1966 this Flora has been virtually completed. The Monocotyledons, which form the last and third volume, were ready for publication in 1968, with the exception of Cyperaceae. As there was no hope of this family being ready for some time, I decided to split the volume into two parts and publish the first one separately. This conveniently included all the petaloid monocotyledons with 37 families, 175 genera and 840 species. Five thousand copies were printed, but about two weeks after publication on 23 August 1968, the printing works was flooded! Enormous damage was done to the stocks and half of the newly printed Flora were destroyed, as well as many of the previous volumes. The employees at Whitefriars Press only managed to salvage the remainder by wading through flood water a meter deep. I am glad to say that insurance refunds have enabled the reprinting of Volume 3 Part 1 to make up for those destroyed.

The separation of the volume into two parts meant the retention of Gramineae, although Dr. W. D. CLAYTON completed the account some years ago. It is now being prepared for the press as Cyperaceae is nearing completion. It became apparent that Miss S. S. HOOPER would be unable to finish this family and I am grateful to Miss D. NAPPER, who has much experience of East African sedges, for taking on the outstanding genera. The whole part will soon be completed and I expect publication to take place next year. The small family Juncaceae will also be included, and in the three families there are 173 genera and about 890 species.

I am now able to provide a synopsis of the entire revised edition of "Flora of West Tropical Africa":

	Families	Genera	Species
Ferns	27	72	312
Gymnosperms	3	3	4
Dicotyledons	159	1298	c. 5200
Monocotyledons	40	c. 368	c. 1810
(approximate)			
Total:	229	1741	7326

Changes and additions are constantly being made and the above totals are certainly on the low side. For instance, 7500 could be taken as a reasonable figure for the number of species in West Africa.

Publication of the several volumes has taken place or is estimated as follows:

Volume I, part 1:	17 August 1954 (re-printed 1966)
Volume I, part 2:	27 March 1958
Ferns and Fern-allies:	October 1959
Volume II:	18 October 1963
Volume III, part 1:	26 August 1968
Plant collectors in West Africa:	(late 1970)
Volume III, Part 2:	(during 1971)
Gazetteer of West Africa:	(during 1971)

Volume I, part 1 of the Flora was sold out and 2000 copies have been reprinted to allow purchasers to obtain the whole Flora. Although sufficient stocks of all the other parts are available at the present time, only 50 copies of Volume I, part 2, which includes Euphorbiaceae and Leguminosae, are left and funds may not be available for reprinting it.

Parallel to the Flora proper are two supplements, besides the "Ferns and Fern-allies" already published. "Plant Collectors in West Africa" is at the press and will be issued as a volume of *Regnum Vegetabile*.

The other supplement, a Gazetteer of West African localities cited in the Flora, is in preparation at Kew by Mrs. F. Neate, who also assisted with the Collectors supplement. It contains some 9000 entries and on publication it will conclude the whole "Flora of West Tropical Africa" project.

During 1969 Mr. H. M. BURKILL recommenced work on the revision of J. M. DALZIEL's "Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa" (1937). The revision was started on a part time basis by Mr. T. A. RUSSELL while he was still at Kew and it is now fully supported by the Ministry of Overseas Development. The work will take some time to complete and publication is not envisaged for several years.